

**PALESTINIANS PUSH FOR U.N. DEAL
TO RESOLVE DEPORTATION CRISIS****By Deborah Kalb
States News Service**

WASHINGTON, Feb. 9 (JTA) -- The Palestinians would drop demands for U.N. sanctions against Israel if the international body could broker a compromise deal to resolve the current deportation crisis, said Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi.

"Sanctions are not the objective, but the means," said Ashrawi, official spokeswoman for the Palestinian delegation to the Middle East peace talks.

In a telephone interview Tuesday with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Ashrawi said Palestinians would be satisfied if they "can get the objective without sanctions."

Ashrawi emphasized that Palestinians objected to efforts by Israel and the United States to work out a compromise deal that bypassed the United Nations.

Ashrawi was in Washington meeting with White House and State Department officials as part of the Clinton administration's attempt to get the Middle East peace process back on track.

It appears that the peace negotiations will remain stalled until an acceptable solution has been found to the crisis over the 415 Palestinian activists deported by Israel last December to south Lebanon.

Israel, in consultation with the United States, offered a compromise plan last week to accept back immediately 100 of the deportees and shorten the term of exile of the others to a maximum of one year, but Palestinians have rejected the proposal.

The U.S. position on the deportees continues to be that Israel's offer meets the requirements of U.N. Security Council resolution 799, which called on Israel to reverse the deportations.

The United States does not "think there's any further action necessary in the Security Council," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said Tuesday at the daily briefing, reiterating what has become an almost constant refrain since the announcement of the Israeli compromise.

U.S. Position on Deportees Unchanged

"I don't see our position changing," said one administration official involved in the negotiations. The official also said that "there seems to be less interest in New York to push sanctions resolutions."

But Ashrawi said Tuesday that the U.S.-Israeli arrangement "legitimized" the deportations. "We see it as a bilateral deal that seeks to get Israel off the hook in terms of implementing" U.N. resolution 799, she said.

With Secretary of State Warren Christopher scheduled to travel to the Middle East later this month, concern is growing that the deportation issue, if not resolved soon, could overshadow the trip and stand in the way of progress on the peace process.

State department officials have been hard at work to defuse the deportation issue and held a series of meetings Monday and Tuesday with

Israelis and Arabs connected to the peace process.

Itamar Rabinovich, Israel's new ambassador to Washington, and three members of the Israeli negotiating team met Tuesday afternoon with Assistant Secretary of State Edward Djerejian to discuss the next round of peace talks, specifically the Palestinian track.

Israeli officials said the meeting was also focused on Christopher's upcoming trip to the region.

Also at the State Department on Tuesday, Djerejian met with the ambassadors from Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt.

Ashrawi said her meetings with Djerejian and other U.S. officials were "constructive," adding that she discussed with the American officials the difference between the American and Palestinian positions on the deportees and whether the compromise arrangement satisfies the U.N. resolution.

Ashrawi, who said she would be holding more meetings with U.S. government officials Thursday, said the Palestinians hoped the deportation issue would be resolved before Christopher's trip to the region, so that the trip would be "substance" rather than "damage control."

"We would like to put the deportation issue behind us," she said.

But in Israel, Cabinet ministers insisted the government would not make any more concessions on the issue. Minister of Health Haim Ramon said the United States was aware of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's determination not to waver from its agreement.

In Washington, an Israeli Embassy Yaron said there has been "no discussion to reopen the understanding between" Christopher and Rabin on the deportation issue.

Richard Haass, Mideast White House adviser in the Bush administration, said this past week that he hopes the deportation situation does not result in another U.N. Security Council vote.

"I've never believed in making Middle East peace process policy in the Security Council," he said.

The only people who "want to go to the U.N." are people who "want to weaken the U.S.-Israeli relationship, or somehow weaken the American role," Haass said.

NEWS ANALYSIS:**DRAMATIC INCREASE IN GAZA VIOLENCE
AMID FRUSTRATION WITH PEACE PROCESS
By Gil Sedan**

JERUSALEM, Feb. 9 (JTA) -- Hardly a day passes now without Palestinians dying in the administered territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The intifada, now more than five years old, has experienced a dramatic increase in violence during the last few months. And Israel's grip on the territories -- particularly the Gaza Strip -- has gotten weaker.

For the time being, the controversy over the deported Palestinians now in southern Lebanon and efforts to resume the peace talks have pushed Gaza into the background of the peace talks.

But even though Gaza seems to have faded

from the top of the peace agenda, conditions on the ground continue to deteriorate.

These are the grim facts that Israelis are confronting after a bloody four days in which 10 Palestinians were shot to death by Israeli troops. The Palestinian deaths between Friday and Monday were the highest four-day toll in two years.

Capping the violence on Tuesday, an Israeli civilian was shot to death in the Gaza Strip.

Twenty Percent Rise in Fatalities

The B'tselem human rights association reported this week an increase of 20 percent in the number of fatalities in the territories in the first six months of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's government as compared with the last six months of Yitzhak Shamir's government.

In the last six months under Shamir, 63 Palestinians were killed, as compared with 76 in the first half-year under Rabin, the report said.

B'tselem also pointed out that a greater number of children were being killed under Rabin's regime, a further sign of deterioration in the territories.

Army Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Ehud Barak disputed B'tselem's report, saying the group's figures were higher than army figures. He noted, however, that the army did not include in its statistics wanted Palestinians shot by soldiers in pursuit.

In response to the recent killings, Israeli ministers from the left-wing Meretz party complained about the rising number of fatalities and demanded at a Cabinet meeting Sunday that the army make efforts to reduce the number of deaths.

Rabin insisted that there was no change in the standing orders to soldiers about when and how to open fire, but Minister of the Environment Yossi Sarid noted that even if the orders are the same, the situation in the field is not-and thus a re-evaluation was warranted.

The truth of the matter is that both Rabin and Sarid are right. The standing orders may not have changed, but the situation certainly has.

The stalemate in the peace process and the growing power of the anti-peace camp in the Palestinian society -- led by the Moslem fundamentalist Hamas movement -- have reignited the intifada, which last year seemed paralyzed.

It is a more violent intifada, with armed gangs roaming almost freely in the remote neighborhoods of Gaza City, the dense refugee camps in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, and the windy alleys of the Nablus casbah.

Armed gangs have left stone-throwing for the kids and are now using guns and rifles which they have managed to collect in the past five years.

The gangs have frequently turned the guns against their own people, murdering fellow Arabs on suspicion of collaboration with the Israeli authorities. And in recent months, the armed nationalist cells have increasingly turned their guns against the army, in a series of daring commando attacks.

Regular army patrols in the heart of Arab cities and refugee camps, let alone remote villages, have been cut to a minimum.

However, in the fight against guerrilla warfare there has been no choice but to use anti-guerrilla tactics. This has meant a larger emphasis on intelligence work, and counter-terrorist operations, mostly by undercover units.

The army's new tactic has been to avoid

confronting mass demonstrations and concentrate instead on hitting the hard-core elements of Palestinian resistance, preferably in their own bases and before damage is caused.

On top of everything, there is a growing hesitancy of regular soldiers to serve in the territories as a result of the increasingly daring attacks and sophisticated ambushes by Palestinians on army vehicles and patrols.

As Palestinian attacks become more bold and frequent, soldiers take fewer chances. They shoot whenever their life is endangered -- or whenever they think their life is endangered.

The shooting incident last weekend at the entrance to the Nuseirat refugee camp in the Gaza Strip was a case in point.

An officer at an army roadblock spotted rifles sticking out of an approaching car. He ordered soldiers to open fire, killing three gunmen and capturing two others.

It was a situation requiring split-second decisions. Had the officer made a mistake identifying the car, two innocent Palestinians would have been killed.

Strict limitations for security reasons on Gaza residents working in Israel has reduced the daily number of laborers crossing into Israel proper from 100,000 in the past to between 30,000 and 35,000 currently.

This has only added to growing unemployment and thus increased frustration in Gaza. The unemployed find themselves on the streets -- and their obvious target of rage is the army.

The difficult situation in the Gaza Strip raises a delicate question: how much longer can this go on?

In the 1980s, Shimon Peres, now foreign minister, was the champion of the "Gaza First" option, which suggested that the problem of the Gaza Strip should be put first on the agenda of the autonomy talks.

But the idea seems to have been put on the back-burner in the present government.

Although Israel -- and perhaps even some of its Arab interlocutors -- might wish Gaza would disappear, the Strip and its 750,000 residents won't fade away that easily.

ISRAELI CITIZEN KILLED IN GAZA By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 9 (JTA) -- An Israeli citizen was murdered Tuesday while driving in his car through the Gaza Strip.

An Israeli Arab who was with him was slightly wounded. Their names were not immediately made public.

Military sources said the victim, a vegetable merchant, was driving in an area which was clearly defined as off-limits to all Israelis, because of the terrorist activities in the vicinity.

The sources said the merchant was driving along with his worker, an Israeli Arab from Jaffa. His car was sprayed with bullets from a passing car, which was reportedly occupied by seven terrorists.

The Arab worker, who was lightly wounded, rushed to a nearby military outpost to summon help.

The killing follows that last weekend of two Israeli soldiers from the Ganei Tal settlement in the Gaza Strip.

They were killed by Palestinian terrorists who staged an ambush of the soldiers inside the settlement.

NUNS SET TO LEAVE AUSCHWITZ DESPITE RIGHT-WING THREATS

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, Feb. 9 (JTA) -- Senior Catholic officials have pledged that the Carmelite nuns occupying a theater building at Auschwitz will vacate their convent shortly, probably by the end of March, but indicated that right-wing nationalists continue to threaten the plan and consider it an affront to Polish national sensibilities.

In a meeting last week with Jewish representatives, Cardinal John O'Connor, archbishop of New York and moderator of Catholic-Jewish affairs for the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, said that the nuns' new convent is complete and ready to be inhabited.

But Catholic officials are not indicating any firm date for the move into the convent, for fear of provoking right-wing nationalists in Poland and France who have said they may try to block the move.

The new cloistered convent is part of a complex of buildings under construction since February 1990, across the road from the Auschwitz death camp, where 1.6 million Jews were murdered by the Nazis.

The complex includes a conference center and library, which have already been completed, and a hostel for conference attendees, which is still being constructed.

Theater Building To Be Restored

Once the nuns are out of the theater building on Auschwitz grounds which they have occupied since 1984, the building will be restored to its original state, according to Rabbi Mark Winer, who participated in the meeting with O'Connor.

Winer is co-chairman for interreligious affairs of the Synagogue Council of America, which, as part of the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations, is the official representative of the Jewish community in dialogue with the Vatican.

Few of the nuns from the theater building are likely to move into the new convent, but they will be sent elsewhere and 24 other members of the Carmelite order will live in the new facility.

The nuns' mother superior, Sister Marie Therese, told Rabbi Leon Klenicki, director of interreligious affairs for the Anti-Defamation League, that she did not intend to move to the new convent.

But senior members of the Catholic hierarchy, both in Poland and in the United States, have assured Jewish representatives that the nuns will vacate the site and that their objections are not an obstacle to fulfilling the pledge that was made in 1987, when a group of European cardinals signed an agreement with representatives of the Jewish community to relocate the nuns within two years.

The project has been beset by political, ideological and pragmatic delays ranging from the nuns' refusal to leave, at one point, to halted construction because of bad winter weather.

The most recent threats by right-wing nationalists in Poland, aided by France's Jean Marie Le Pen, to try and interfere with the nuns' leaving, complicate the already-delayed conclusion of the commitment.

"They may picket or demonstrate," said Rabbi A. James Rudin, director of interfaith affairs for the American Jewish Committee, who

also participated in the meeting with O'Connor. "They say this is Catholic sensibility being trampled on."

"From a Polish perspective, Auschwitz is a sacred place, because before it was a death camp for Jews it was a concentration camp for Poles. It is a powerful place in Polish consciousness," said Winer, of the Synagogue Council.

"They don't want to feel pushed out, though the church has recognized that moving the nuns out is a sacred commitment," he added.

According to ADL's Klenicki, also at the meeting with O'Connor, "Both Jewish and Polish Christian leadership should be very cautious at this point in order to complete the move. Church leadership wants to avoid a confrontation" with the nationalists.

While in Poland late last year, Klenicki said he read articles in the right-wing Polish press which said that "Jews once again want to suffocate Poland."

Said Winer, "There's a lot of commitment from the Catholics on this thing, a lot of good will, but it's not finished."

"It's important that the Jewish world know that the church is keeping its word. This is a test for how serious the church is about building a new relationship with the Jewish people. It looks like we're almost there," he said, "but 'almost' doesn't count."

DRUG ADDICT CONFESSES TO VANDALIZING MONUMENT

By Henriette Boas

AMSTERDAM, Feb. 9 (JTA) -- The man who damaged a monument dedicated to the liberation of Auschwitz was not spurred on by anti-Semitism, but apparently was a drug addict seeking revenge against his employer.

The damage was carried out on Jan. 31-- the same day the monument was unveiled in a memorial ceremony -- by a 38-year-old Amsterdam heroin addict who worked as a freelance assistant at the glass manufacturing firm which produced the memorial.

The incident immediately caught the attention of the Dutch media under the assumption that it was motivated by anti-Semitism.

But the vandal turned himself in to police last Thursday night, saying he had been motivated to damage the piece of art after noticing that an error had been made in the monument's construction.

The man claimed he acted on orders from the factory's manager. However, the manager denied the charge and said he believed the vandalism was an act of revenge for not receiving money and that no racist or anti-Semitic motives were involved.

The manager said the man has been a heroin addict for a long time and had asked him for money to buy drugs.

In his confession to police, the vandal said he had climbed over the fence of the Wertheim public gardens, where the monument stood, and attacked the memorial with a pickax. The memorial's six large horizontal glass plates were splintered.

The manager of the glass manufacturing firm said the attempt to implicate him was absurd. He said that if there had been any fault in the monument -- and he denied there was any -- it could have been easily removed at practically no cost.

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES:
 POLLARD BECOMING CENTRAL CAUSE
 FOR MAINSTREAM JEWISH GROUPS**
 By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, Feb. 9 (JTA) -- Jonathan Pollard's hour may be coming round at last.

Advocates for the convicted spy have long targeted two obstacles to clemency or pardon: Apathy from Jewish organizations and malevolence from former Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger. Now those obstacles may be fading away.

Among the Jewish organizations recently calling for clemency for Pollard, or a presidential review of his life sentence, are the American Jewish Congress, American Jewish Committee, Hadassah, the new American Zionist Movement, community relations councils in New York, San Francisco and Boston, and Chicago's Jewish federation.

And when the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council -- an umbrella group of local and national Jewish bodies dealing with public policy -- gathers for its annual plenum this weekend in Washington, it may well call for the review of the sentence.

Meanwhile, Weinberger has passed word that he would not object to Pollard's release, according to a report published in the *Forward*, a New York Jewish weekly.

Weinberger's message was reportedly conveyed amid a number of appeals by prominent Jewish Republicans to then-President Bush, in the final days of his administration.

Weinberger's views are significant because it was his still-classified presentation before the sentencing judge in 1987 that is considered to have brought about Pollard's life sentence, despite a plea bargain agreement with the government.

Pollard, a former U.S. Navy analyst, pled guilty to conspiracy to commit espionage after passing 360 cubic feet of top-secret documents to Israel.

Additionally, Weinberger would be in a position to judge whether the information in the documents Pollard provided to Israel -- and might still remember -- could still jeopardize American national security.

Jewish Republicans Appealed To Bush

Among the Republicans who reportedly raised the issue with Bush were party strategists Fred Malek and Robert Teeter, and Jewish leaders Max Fisher and Gordon Zacks.

The adoption of the issue by those Republicans presumably most dismayed by American Jewry's defections from the Republican ticket in the last election may imply that they see clemency for Pollard as a way Bush could have rebuilt bridges to the Jewish community.

The perception of Pollard's plight as a Jewish communal concern illustrates how far his supporters have come, from the point not too long ago when his cause was taken up only by his family and individuals working on the fringes of the Jewish community.

Within the mainstream community, two trends have apparently coincided to reverse the position of studious non-involvement in the case adopted by most of the Jewish defense agencies.

One is that Pollard's legal appeals came to an end in October, when the Supreme Court refused to take up his case. Pollard had argued that the government had improperly coerced his guilty plea, and then failed to fulfill its promise

not to seek the harshest possible sentence against him.

The other is the increasing grass-roots support being generated by the campaign of Pollard supporters.

With that has come increasing weariness among mainstream leaders with what is described as a "pattern of vilification of people who do not support intervention," in the words of one Jewish organizational official who, like most of his colleagues, would not be quoted by name saying anything critical of Pollard supporters.

One of those most vilified has been Philip Baum, associate executive director of the American Jewish Congress and head of a NJCRAC committee concerning Pollard.

Under his direction, NJCRAC took the position that Pollard's sentence did not reflect any anti-Semitism and was not therefore a matter for Jewish communal concern.

'We Had No View'

Now, Baum supports calling on President Clinton to review Pollard's sentence, to determine whether it should be commuted to time served.

"There has been this misunderstanding that we were opposed to commuting his sentence," said Baum. "That was not our position. We had no view."

Baum's new position, which was rejected by the NJCRAC committee last month, was adopted by the AJCongress governing council on Sunday. But the council amended Baum's proposal into a stronger call, asking that Pollard's sentence be commuted unless "good cause to the contrary" is found by a presidential review.

Also since the NJCRAC committee meeting, a similar policy was adopted by the American Jewish Committee, which wrote Bush just before he left office, asking him to determine whether the life sentence was appropriate.

"My own sense," said Samuel Rabinove, director of legal affairs for AJCommittee, "is that since the legal case was finished, more people who used to feel this is not one for us to get into, feel it's time already, he's been punished enough, let's ask the president to let him out."

The Anti-Defamation League will be reviewing its own position immediately before the NJCRAC plenum.

The carefully worded statements of AJCommittee and AJCongress do not actually ask for Pollard's release, but only for presidential consideration of the matter.

Such a review of the case was promised by Clinton during the election campaign.

Others organizations are taking a stronger position. Hadassah called on Clinton to "commute Jonathan Pollard's sentence to time already served."

Also calling directly for commutation was the Jewish Community Relations Council of San Francisco. San Francisco's council, along with those of Boston, Houston and Flint, Mich., put forward the resolution for consideration at the NJCRAC plenum.

It is likely, though, that a milder resolution calling for a review, rather than outright commutation, will be offered at the NJCRAC floor.

This will enable the AJCommittee and the AJCongress, which along with the ADL have a veto power over NJCRAC policies, to support the measure. It would avoid an implicit judgment into the hazy issues concerning just how damaging Pollard's espionage was to American security.